Examining Military Governance as a Part of Professional Military Education

Mr. Brent Bankus, Colonel Lorelei Coplen, and Professor James O. Kievit

After the capture of Baghdad in 2003, the expectation was that an Iraqi entity would quickly step forward to begin to fill the role of government in the territory formerly ruled by Saddam Hussein. Instead, there was a power vacuum which the United States – and in particular the United States military – had to fill. Similarly, in Afghanistan, despite the relatively quick identification of Hamid Karzai as the "designated" national leader, it also became clear that the new national government lacked many of the essential capabilities required to actually implement good governance. Again, despite the clear preference of many of today's military officers to have some *other* entity (whether of the U.S. government, the United Nations, or even non-government private contractors) be responsible for doing so, that responsibility initially fell largely, if not exclusively, on U.S. military commanders. Even though the U.S. military, especially the U.S. Army, has had a long history of military governance activities, many of those commanders felt unprepared and/or that it was "not really my job."

In order to assist selected future senior leaders to be better prepared for such responsibilities, the U.S. Army War College began offering an elective course entitled "U.S. Military Governance Operations, A Historical Perspective." This issue paper briefly outlines the scope of that course and provides reflections regarding military governance developed by students who have participated. While not in any sense an exhaustive examination of either the history of military governance or the totality of the student learning experience, this short paper hopefully provides insights valuable to the broader national security community as well as potentially encouraging its readers to delve more deeply into the topic of military governance. For the purpose of this paper the following is provided as the definition of the term military government/governance:

> *Military government is the form of administration by which an occupying power exercises governmental authority over occupied territory. The necessity for such government arises from the failure or inability of the legitimate government to exercise its functions on account of the military occupation, or the undesirability of allowing it to do so.*[1]

The Course

"U.S. Military Governance Operations: Historical Case Studies" examines past U.S. military governance operations across the spectrum of conflict, geographically and chronologically. The course is designed to provide its prospective Joint Service officer and civilian students an understanding and appreciation for U.S. military governance operations from the mid-19th century to the present, as a foundation for evaluating whether and how "lessons learned" in the past might be relevant, codified and utilized for current and future operations. Students are exposed to the nature and challenges of previous military governance operations and are expected to reflect on the implications for potential future missions of the U.S. military. In addition, the students read, analyze, and critique the latest Joint, Army, and interagency doctrinal manuals and concepts related to establishing and administering temporary military governance. This elective adds breadth and depth to concepts and issues taught in the U.S.

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1. U.S. Department of the Army, *The Law of Land Warfare*, Field Manual 27-10 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, July 1956), A-92. Note that in this definition "Occupying Power" and "Occupation" simply refer to the potentially extended presence of military forces on territory, and do not have any implied intent for "annexation" or long-term aspirations of sovereignty over that territory.

Mr. Bankus is a Regional Security Analyst, Operations and Gaming Division (OGD), National Security Issues Group, Center for Strategic Leadership (CSL), U.S. Army War College (USAWC)

Colonel Coplen is director of the Policy Divison, Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, USAWC.

Professor Kievit is a Professor of Strategic Intelligence and Leaderships, DA Spport Branch, OGD, USAWC

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Army War College's National Security Policy and Strategy, Theory of War and Strategy, and Theater Strategy and Campaigning core courses.

The course is conducted as a graduate-level reading seminar course, and consists of ten sessions. The first session provides an introduction to the foundational basis for the concept of military governance, with key readings such as the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific's "What is Good Governance?" as well as U.S. Constitutional Law directly applicable to the topic. This is followed by eight sessions examining key periods of the U.S. military planning and implementing governance activities:

- Session 2: Examine military 'governance' operations associated with the Mexican American War 1846-48, the Civil War 1861-1865 & Post Civil War South, and the Post Civil War West.
- Session 3: Examine military 'governance' operations associated with the Spanish American War and its aftermath, including operations in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines, as well as selected other Caribbean and Latin American Interventions.
- Session 4: Examine military 'governance' operations associated with World War I and the post-war Occupation of Germany's Rhineland territories.
- Session 5: Examine military 'governance' operations associated with various Caribbean and Latin American Interventions during the period 1926-1940, as well as the U.S. military's involvement in administering the Civilian Conservation Corps program domestically.
- Session 6: Analyze the path to the U.S. Army's involvement as lead agency for military governance during the prelude to WWII, how the School of Military Government and Administration came to be, as well as the initial military governance operations in North Africa and Sicily.
- Session 7: Examine the 1944-45 military governance operations in France and Germany; and also the post-war Occupations of Germany, Italy and Austria.
- Session 8: Examine the 1944-45 military governance operations in the Philippines and Okinawa; and also the post-war Occupation of Japan.
- Session 9: Examine military governance operations 1956-1996, including activities in Vietnam, Panama, Kuwait and Iraq following Operation Desert Storm, and multiple interventions in Haiti.

Throughout the sessions assigned readings include extensive primary source documents from the military organizations involved in planning and executing governance activities; selected primary and secondary sources providing the perspectives of the "governed;" and also the relevant "doctrinal" publications of the period. The final session of the course provides the students the opportunity to synthesize what they have discovered and critique the most current military doctrinal manuals related to civil affairs and stability operations (there is no longer any manual specifically addressing the planning and execution of 'military government').

Student Reflections

The following paragraphs provide some important student 'findings' based on their examination of past experience and prospective involvement in military governance:

While current public and professional discourse usually implies military involvement in governance operations is novel, even a cursory, much less a careful, study of U.S. military history indicates this situation is neither new to military professionals nor is the military generally inexpert in its execution. Equally important to note, however, is that the U.S. military has not traditionally viewed its involvement in civil government as the ideal solution, *per se*, but always as a transitional situation, preferably of short duration. But if the military generally begins a conflict intending to avoid governance responsibilities if at all possible, it nevertheless all too often – even usually – ends up executing such operations.

A historical review of conflicts involving U.S. military governance operations, irrespective of size or duration, reveals the following interwoven characteristics of the overall operating environment predominate, although they are not universal:

- Remoteness—far removed from the seat of the parent-nation of the military government;
- Absence of alternative civilian government—by devastation or by choice of the occupying power;
- Absence of services and infrastructure—either undeveloped or destroyed;
- Varying degrees of opposition to occupying authority—from civil unrest to irregular military activity to residual opposing regular forces;

- Generally unilateral—negligible or non-exist coalition (international) relationships;
- Business equaled government—and government equaled business; and,
- Independent—both in leader style (hierarchal) and in interagency approach (a term not necessarily understood or needed).

To be successful, military governors were and had to be:

- Empowered: Able to execute governance tasks based upon a clear understanding of the occupying government power's intent with respect to end state (or, in absence of such and understanding, successful governors nonetheless felt "empowered" to make decisions based on their own assessments of the situation, and were then 'backed up' by their home government).
- Focused: Perhaps related to their sense of empowerment or their remote locations, successful military governors generally demonstrated a "long view" to requisite civil government function solutions;
- Embedded: Often fully participating in the local culture, thereby providing a sensibility to the populace that contributed to more effective governance. In the negative, however, on more than one occasion an embedded military governor may be accused of "going native" and not upholding perceived "American" values.
- Experienced: Generally older, military governors were often experienced in both life skills and advanced education, enabling them to understand the complexities of civil government functions.
- Directive: As well as (sometimes) charismatic, historic military governors understood they were in charge and usually made no apologies for their directive natures and leadership style.

Although contemporary conditions, circumstances, and influences are in some ways similar to those of the past, there has been sufficient evolution to the operating environment that calls for some selected modification of the characteristics described above:

- Remoteness—military governors may still find themselves in as remote a physical location as any governor in the past, but "remoteness" no longer includes communication. Good, bad, or indifferent, military governors of today have direct access to their own leadership, and vice versa.
- Absence of alternative civilian government—although there may still be an absence of a formal or functioning civilian government, there is no longer at a corresponding complete absence of civilian oversight for a military governor.
- Absence of services and infrastructure—relatively unchanged; due to the nature of military conflict, military governors cannot expect functioning services or infrastructure.
- Varying degrees of opposition to occupying authority—from civil unrest to irregular military activity to residual opposing forces, this can be considered constant "unknown" when planning for military governments even in the contemporary operating environments.
- Generally multilateral—whether including other international governments, other governmental agencies, private commercial enterprises, or civil society, military governors no longer operate in an environment where they can be ignorant of the impact and influences of other organizations and societal sectors.
- Business does not equal government—and government does not equal business. The two sectors are no longer one and the same, but they are intertwined still.
- Interdependent—both in leader style (collaborative) and in an inclusive approach, a military governor of today must be less directive and perhaps even less "visible" to be effective.

Today, as in the past, effective military governors must be empowered, focused, embedded, and experienced. But a "warrior king" model may not suffice. Instead, the following ten interwoven characteristics[2] from modern social science may be useful to consider and attempt to develop for the potential or actual military governor:

1. *A spirit of inclusiveness*, willing and even eager to include "not only to participants but to those who stand to benefit" from the overall governance activity.
2. *Tri-sector exposure*, i.e., having experience in all three societal sectors (commercial, government, and civil society) through their own work or education, thereby developing "integrative leaders (who) will have the opportunity to develop their business acumen, a keen sense of civic issues, and a balanced view of bureaucracy."

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2. See Mark Gerencser, Reginald Van Lee, Fernando Napolitano, and Christopher Kelly's *Megacommunities: How Leaders of Government, Business and Non-Profits Can Tackle Today's Global Challenges Together*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, pp 191-217, for more on 'megacommunities' and these characteristics of good 'governors'.

3. *A non-imperial approach*, indicative of evolution from hierarchal and directive leadership to a style of coaching and persuading, and enjoying the perception and reality of personal accessibility (even while often still engaging in positional authority within the parent organization).

4. *Navigation skills (a light "touch")*, utilizing a "guiding hand" as opposed to a "heavy hand."

5. *Communication skills*, possessing superb verbal and written communication skills, and understanding the role and application of multimedia communications within the overall community as well as within the parent organization/sectors.

6. *Technological savvy*, being technologically competent; not a designer *per se* but a knowledgeable consumer of technological tools, new media, and systems.

7. *Adaptability*, or "openness to influence", that is, both accepting the backgrounds and cultures of other participants or constituents as well as being "a student of sustainable globalization."

8. *The talent to foster talent*, or "be a good team and talent builder, drawing out qualities and capabilities that people didn't know they had."

9. *Presence and passion*, or to be strong and centered, yet not necessarily charismatic; willing to "make [good governance] part of their personal agenda."

10. *Long-term thinking*, while recognizing the value of short-term results, nonetheless viewing the future in terms of sustainability of the overall community's efforts.

The Future

Field Manual 3-0 directs that military leaders must be prepared to assume responsibilities to support governance and its related activities, but are not intended nor expected to maintain a military-led government for a long duration.[3] Military governance is not only steeped in tradition and history, it continues to be an appropriate utilization of our military leaders.

It therefore remains a responsibility for our professional military education system to continue to assist the development of the requisite skills and characteristics among the Army's leaders. Whether elective courses are sufficient or whether instead there should be the re-establishment of a formal School of Military Governance may be an issue worthy of further examination and reflection?

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3.   Field Manual 3-0, 3-15.

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